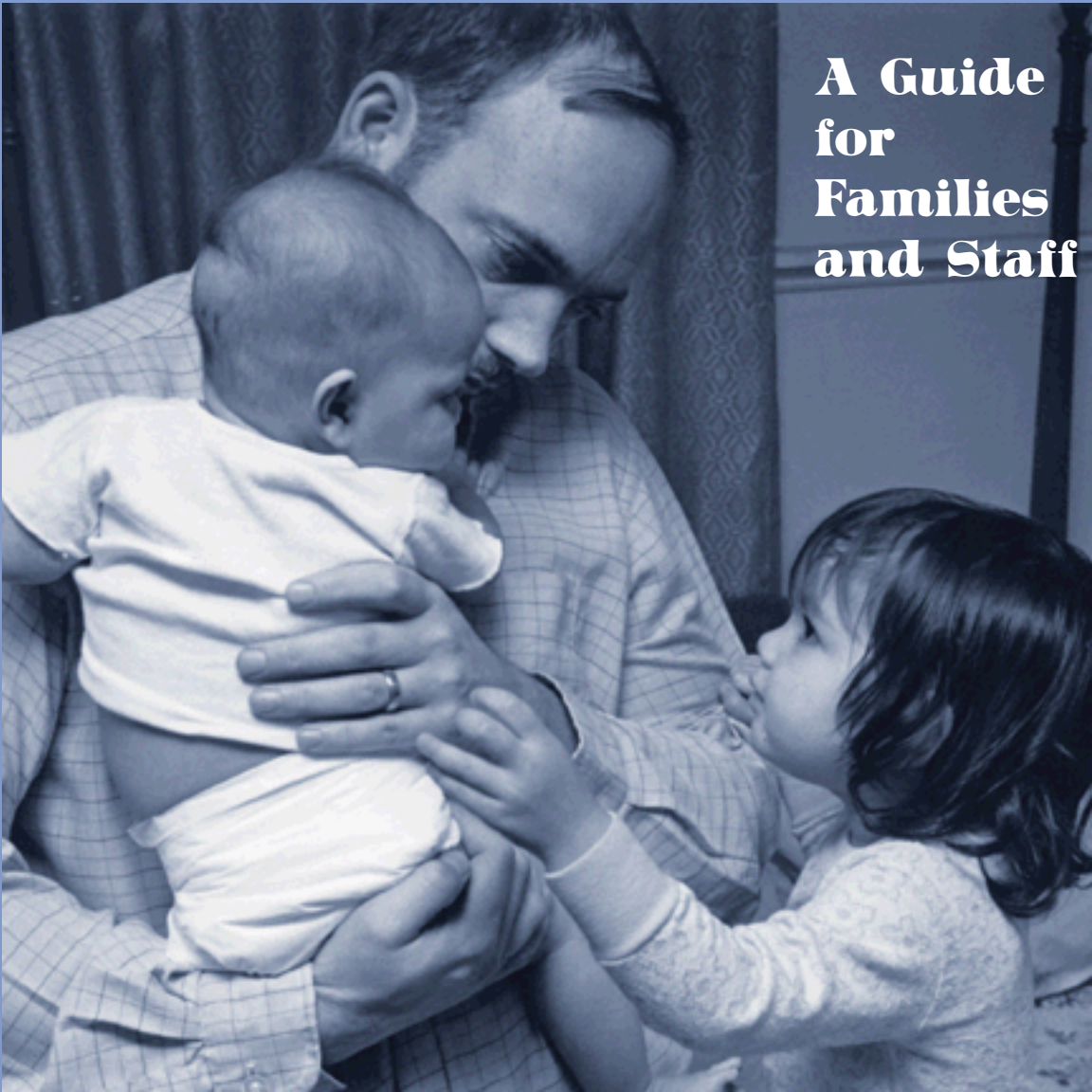


Transition from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services

**A Guide
for
Families
and Staff**



**New Hampshire Department of Education,
Bureau of Special Education**

**New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services,
Bureau of Developmental Services**

Spring 2005

Our Transition Philosophy

The transition from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool special education and other community services is a time of change. Change usually causes stress. We can reduce this stress and make transition a positive experience for all involved by working as a team of families, preschools, early supports and services, and all other early care and education staff working with the family.

Effective teams establish open communication, share information and promote understanding and respect. All team members – families and staff – need knowledge and skills regarding the transition process and how to work together. They need to know their roles in developing each child and family's plan for transition as well as regulations, procedures and timelines that guide the transition process. The process needs to have a comfortable pace as families become aware of the events and decisions that need to be made prior to entry into the school district or other community services for children of preschool age. It is in the best interest of the children, families and staff to have the transition timeline of support begin well before age three and include follow-up activities.

The transition of a child and family from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services doesn't happen to families. It happens with families as they direct the overall process and share what they know about their child. We believe that when families and staff work together as a team, the best possible transitions occur for children and families and the agencies that serve them.



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Introduction

The transition of infants and toddlers from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to services for a child of preschool age is a major milestone for children and families. As with most changes, this transition presents both challenges and opportunities. Working together, families and staff can provide a smooth transition for every child. This guide has been developed to help families and staff in this regard. It replaces an earlier guide, *Change Is in the Air: A Guide to Transition from Early Supports and Services to Preschool Special Education*, by the Preschool Technical Assistance Network (PTAN) at Southeastern Regional Education Service Center (SERESC). To assist the reader, terms used in this guide are defined in the “Transition Dictionary,” on page 22.



The Transition Process

Why do children transition from ESS and where do they go?

Children and families receive ESS until the child turns 3 years old, as long as the child remains eligible for such services. Sometimes a child becomes ineligible because he/she makes enough progress that services are no longer needed. Sometimes parents decide to leave these services because of family preferences. In many instances, a child and his/her family remain in ESS until the child turns 3 years old.

When a child and his/her family leave ESS, there are a number of transition options. If the family chooses, they may transition to no services at all. Sometimes a child transitions to community services without specialized supports such as child care, a private preschool, Head Start, or community recreation programs. Sometimes a child may have an educational disability that causes him/her to need, and be eligible for, special education and related services through the local school district.

When does the transition process start?

The ESS service coordinator assists the family in the transition process and serves as a link between ESS and other community services including school district services. A written Transition Plan is key to this process. Timelines for developing the Transition Plan are determined by the child's age:

- Beginning at 24 months of age for a child in ESS, or
- Less than 24 months of age if the child is determined to be no longer eligible to receive family-centered early supports and services, or
- As soon as possible for a child entering ESS after 24 months of age

What Are Transition Plans?

The transition process for every child begins with a written Transition Plan, which is a part of each child and family's Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP). The child and family's IFSP Team develops the IFSP upon entering ESS and reviews it every six months. Regardless of when the child and family enter ESS, a Transition Plan must be developed and all activities must be completed on or before the child's third birthday.

This plan addresses transition from ESS to the school district, area agency services for a child 3 years of age or older, or community services such as child care, private preschool, Head Start, recreation programs and Partners in Health. Plans are considered complete when the family has given informed consent by signing the IFSP containing the Transition Plan. Plan components include:

- Preparing the child for transition as appropriate
- Reviewing all community options for services that may be available after the transition, such as child care, private preschool, special education, Head Start, recreation programs and Partners in Health
- Reviewing available community programs for the family, such as family/parent support groups, parent workshops, and sibling support groups
- Providing information about parental rights and responsibilities
- Identifying, scheduling, and conducting all agreed-upon evaluation/assessment procedures necessary to determine eligibility for future program enrollment
- Assisting the family in accessing available programs and services for which the child would be eligible by completing forms and applications, compiling records, obtaining transportation, and/or obtaining necessary adaptive and assistive devices/equipment
- Assisting the family in evaluating potential programs through site visits, with or without the child, personal contacts, or contact with families of children already participating in such programs
- Convening the Transition Team for the Transition Conference

What Are the Transition Team and Transition Conference?

At least 90 days, and not more than 9 months, before the child turns 3 and, if agreed to by the family and IFSP team, up to 6 months before the child turns 3, the ESS service coordinator, with family consent, convenes a Transition Team to conduct a Transition Conference. This team and conference help the family to become familiar with their school district preschool personnel and other services in their community.

The Transition Team includes:

- Family members
- Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) staff
- School district staff
- If appropriate, staff from area agency services for children 3 years of age or older or from community services such as child care, Head Start, private preschools, recreation programs or Partners in Health

The Transition Team conducts a Transition Conference to:

- Establish a transition plan with the school district or, if appropriate, recreation programs, Partners in Health or other community services and
- For children who may be eligible for Special Education, review the child's program options for the period from his/her third birthday through the remainder of the school year.



How are referrals to preschool special education handled?

Based on transition planning, when the child is 30 to 32 months old (or earlier if necessary), the ESS service coordinator, with family consent, makes a referral to the school district for a multidisciplinary team evaluation to determine whether the child has an educational disability that makes him/her eligible for special education services. Once informed consent is given and referral is made to special education, the special education process timelines begin as noted later in this guide in “Putting It All Together—Transition Timeline” (on pages 8–9).

The school district is responsible for ensuring that appropriate evaluations as required by law are conducted. The school district may carry out this responsibility by using evaluations from various sources—those it conducts or evaluations already available through ESS, the family or other sources.

What happens if the child is determined to have an educational disability?

If the child is determined to have an educational disability, this makes him or her eligible for preschool special education. The district convenes an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, of which the family is a member, to develop an IEP for the child. The IEP is a written plan that describes the services the child will receive. The IEP team is required to consider, but not necessarily to implement, the child’s IEP. IEP development serves as the basis for determining an appropriate program and educational placement for the child at the time of transition. With family consent, an IFSP may be used in place of the IEP for a child age 3 through 5 years with an educational disability.

The IEP (or IFSP) describes the services the school will provide. The IEP must be in effect on or before the child’s third birthday. The IEP team must determine when services will begin based on the child’s needs, not on the school calendar. It is important that the team plans ahead so there is no gap in services from ESS to preschool special education. For many districts, service options look different during summer and other vacation times. For example, a Head Start or school district preschool program may not be operating during summer months. In this case, the team must determine what program the child needs and when it must begin. The district must then provide that program at no cost to the family as part of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

The child must receive preschool special education services in the least restrictive environment. This means that the IEP Team must consider providing services to the child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in a setting in which the child is educated with children without disabilities. Depending on the child's needs and abilities, the child may receive special education services in a school district preschool special education class or in a district preschool that includes both children with and without disabilities. Sometimes, the district may provide preschool special education in settings other than district classrooms. That is, the district may make arrangements for a preschool child to receive special education services in a Head Start program or in a community preschool or child care. The child may also receive services at home.

What happens if the child is determined *not* to have an educational disability?

If the child is not eligible for school district preschool special education services or if the family prefers not to place their child in these services, IFSP transition planning considers other service options after the child turns 3. ESS helps the family access these services.



Transition Timeline – Putting It All Together

The following describes timelines, persons responsible and tasks for the transition process based on legal requirements and effective practice research.

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
When the child is 24 months or younger and is <i>no longer eligible</i> for ESS	Service Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates the ESS IFSP Team that develops and implements a written transition plan, including, as appropriate, steps to exit the program, as part of the IFSP. The plan includes supporting the family's exploration of future options; activities to prepare the child for transition; parent training and information. All team members get a copy of the transition plan.
When the child is 24 months or younger and remains eligible for ESS	Service Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates the ESS IFSP Team that develops and implements a written transition plan, including, as appropriate, steps to exit the program, as part of the IFSP. The plan includes supporting the family's exploration of future options; activities to prepare the child for transition; parent training and information. All team members get a copy of the transition plan.
When the child is 30–32 months or younger	Service Coordinator	<p>With the family's written consent,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a written referral of the child to the school district and/or other community services or resources deemed appropriate in the transition plan. Facilitates arrangements for a Transition Conference by a Transition Team, including ESS staff, the family, and school district and/or other community service staff.
Within 15 days of the school district's receipt of referral	IEP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP team determines what action needs to be taken regarding the referral (disposition of the referral) and provides written notice to the parents regarding those decisions, including a description of the district's special education procedures. The meeting to determine the disposition of the referral can be the Transition Conference. The meeting could be held in conjunction with the Transition Conference.

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
At least 90 days and not more than 9 months before child turns 3 and, if agreed to by family and IFSP team, up to 6 months before the child turns 3	Service Coordinator	<p>Coordinates the Transition Conference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the child's program options for the period from his/her third birthday through the remainder of the school year; and Update the transition plan with the school district or recreation programs, Partners in Health and other community services <p>With the family's written consent,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transmits additional information about the child necessary to ensure continuity of supports and services to the regional area agency and school district or recreation programs, Partners in Health and community services
Within 45 days of receiving family consent to evaluate	IEP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates completion of evaluations and develops a written summary report of the evaluations, including information on parent rights for appeal and independent evaluation. Once this is completed, determines eligibility of the child for preschool special education through the school district at an Evaluation Team Meeting. <i>Note:</i> As part of the transition plan, the IEP team establishes tasks and timelines for evaluation completion so that the IEP can be completed and services can be implemented by the child's third birthday.
Within 30 days from date of IEP Team meeting to determine eligibility	IEP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops IEP for initial placement in preschool special education if child is eligible for these services
Prior to child's third birthday	Service Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenes an IFSP Team meeting if the child is not eligible for preschool special education to discuss options when child turns 3
By the child's third birthday	School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a child who is eligible for preschool special education through the school district, a written IEP is agreed upon and is being implemented.
After child turns 3	Community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child is receiving community services as a result of family preference (for example, if child is not eligible for special education or if the family declines special education services)
After child turns 3	Service Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes follow-up contact with family to check status within 2 months

Transition Legal Requirements

The information in this guide is based on federal and state legal requirements. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) is a federal law with requirements for serving a child with a disability. Part C of IDEA 2004 covers Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) for a child birth through age 2 with a disability and his/her family. Part B of IDEA 2004 covers special education and related services provided through school districts for a child age 3 through 21 with an educational disability. The state of New Hampshire and local ESS and school districts also have rules to go along with IDEA 2004.

IFSP	IEP
For a child birth through age 2 and his/her family	For a child age 3 through 21
Used in ESS and sometimes preschool special education	Used in school district special education
Information about child's present levels of development	Information about child's present levels of educational performance and participation in developmentally appropriate activities
With family's approval, family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to this child's development	Family's concerns about enhancing their child's education
IFSP team determines the outcomes with an emphasis on family priorities	IEP team, including parents and school staff, determine goals
Major outcomes desired for child and family and a plan to determine progress toward outcomes	Measurable annual goals with short-term objectives that enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum, and a plan to determine progress toward goals
Natural environments where services will be provided	Extent to which child will participate with children without disabilities in regular activities or classes (least restrictive environment)
Specific family-centered early supports and services needed to achieve the outcomes	Special education, related services, supplemental aids and services, modifications and supports to help the child make progress and participate in routines

IDEA 2004 requirements for ESS and schools are very much alike in some ways. In other ways, they are very different. A comparison of the IFSP for ESS and the IEP for schools is a good example.

Federal, state and local rules tell how the transition process and services for a child with a developmental or educational disability are supposed to work. They also make sure that parents have important rights.

- Parents have the right to be involved throughout the transition process and in the services provided to their child.
- Parents are members of the IFSP and IEP teams that make decisions for the child receiving early supports and services or preschool special education services.
- Parents have the right to see the child's record. That record is confidential.
- ESS and school districts must notify parents before:
 - Evaluating the child,
 - Determining eligibility, or
 - Making changes in services.
- Parents' written permission is required before a child can be evaluated or receive ESS or school district special education services. Parents can withdraw their consent at any time.
- If parents and ESS or school cannot agree on the evaluation, identification, or provision of services to a child, the parents, ESS or school each has the right to seek mediation or request a due process hearing to settle the disagreement.

This description is just a summary of parental rights. A full explanation of ESS parent rights is contained in the *Know Your Rights* parent handbook provided to all ESS families. Parents will be given a full explanation by a school representative of their rights after the child has been determined eligible for special education services, and should feel comfortable to ask questions for clarification.

Transition Tips

Tips for teamwork

Transition is a time of change. Change can cause stress. Families and staff can reduce stress and make transition a positive experience by following these simple strategies for effective teamwork.

1. Stay focused on a common goal—developing a mutually agreeable plan to make the child’s transition to preschool services as smooth as possible for the child, the family, and the staff who serve them.
2. Treat fellow team members as equals.
3. Share information to help everyone understand your ideas and facts that you have.
4. Listen carefully to what other team members have to say.
5. Ask questions in order to get more information or to try to understand the perspective of others.
6. Differences of opinion are to be expected on any team. Show respect for all ideas, even those with which you disagree. When you do disagree, challenge ideas and not people.
7. As the team considers various decisions, have them name as many different options as possible. Then, talk about the pros and cons of the options before choosing the ones the team thinks are best.

Tips for families

The family is the key in planning and supporting an effective transition for their child.

1. Be an active participant in the transition process and stay involved.
2. You know your child better than anyone else. Trust that you have much to offer. Parents are natural advocates for their children.
3. Be prepared and on time for meetings. Decide in advance what you want to share and the questions you want to ask. Writing things down can help. Bring a picture of your child and information about your child's strengths and needs and what you have seen at home and in other settings, such as:
 - My child's strengths are . . .
 - My child learns best when . . .
 - My child is motivated by . . .
 - I want my child to learn . . .
 - My child likes to . . .
 - My child adjusts to new people and places by . . .
 - I would describe my child's personality as . . .
 - When my child is upset, he [she] . . .
 - It helps my child to calm down when . . .
 - I want everyone to know that my child . . .
4. Don't go it alone. Bring someone with you to meetings to take notes and to be another pair of ears or emotional support. Use a local support group to get to know other families who have been through the process or who soon will be.
5. If you hear ideas you don't understand, ask for more information or an explanation. Use positive statements such as, "My child needs . . .," "I am concerned that . . .," "I understand that . . .," "Tell me more about . . ."

6. Listen to what team members say, being flexible to consider what others say but also firm about major issues that are important to you. If you are uncomfortable making a decision when asked for one, don't feel like you have to decide right on the spot. Take time to think things over before deciding, keeping in mind to make the decision as soon as possible, since not making an important decision may delay services for your child. Remember, you have 14 days to sign an IEP, and that you can agree to all, a part of, or none of the IEP.
7. You can ask for the meeting to be rescheduled if you need more time or information, if you feel that the team has hit a "dead end" or if necessary team members leave the meeting before decisions are made.
8. Do your homework to know your rights, your options and the rules for transition and services for a child with a disability. You can ask ESS and school district staff for information, including materials designed especially for parents.
9. Ask for more information about and the opportunity to visit services you are considering.



Tips for preparing the child and supporting adjustment in the new setting

1. Get information or training about preparing the child for transition and helping the child adjust to a new setting after transition.
2. Help the child prepare for the transition by visiting the place to which he/she is transitioning.
3. Talk to the child about the transition, including saying good-bye to ESS providers and meeting new friends.
4. Help the child by reading to him books about transition, such as those recommended in this guide.
5. Develop common learner outcomes and teaching strategies among ESS, school and other agencies to make sure that all services for young children in the community are working toward the same goals. This makes it easier for the child to maintain progress and adjust to the new setting. It also helps families better understand and support teaching goals.
6. In IFSP/IEP transition planning, address issues of preschool instruction and environmental adaptations (as needed) that facilitate placement of the child in the least restrictive environment.
7. In IFSP/IEP transition planning, determine activities that ESS staff and families can use to help prepare the child for and adjust to preschool services, recreation programs, Partners in Health and other community services.
8. Do follow-up after the child enters preschool or other community services, such as linking ESS and preschool/community staff or checking with families and staff on the child's adjustment.

Tips for agencies

ESS, school districts and other agencies involved in transition should collaborate on the development of strategies to support the transition process. They should build supports for teamwork and families as noted in these tips. They should also have collaborative transition procedures and timelines, ensure effective staff involvement, and prepare the child or support adjustment in the new setting.

Have collaborative transition procedures and timelines among ESS, schools and other agencies

Establish an interagency committee between ESS, schools and other agencies to:

1. Use the Transition Timeline in this guide to negotiate common transition policies and procedures to address:
 - Process of referral, evaluation, IFSP/IEP development, placement, follow-up
 - Timelines for the process to meet legal requirements and to be responsive to local, family and child needs
 - Local service delivery system within which transition is being established
 - Common knowledge base and terminology among agencies
 - Eligibility for services, including consideration of conducting joint evaluations and using ESS and/or school district evaluation tools
 - Communication channels
 - Records and confidentiality
 - Roles and responsibilities of agencies, staff and families
2. Adapt the Transition Timeline to use as a chart in each child's record to document transition tasks and timelines.
3. Meet routinely (every month or two) as an interagency committee to coordinate transition and implement other activities, such as those described in these tips.

Ensure effective staff involvement

1. Provide staff training on transition procedures and timelines and their roles and responsibilities, including expectations for participation in transition planning meetings and related activities.
2. Train staff on running effective meetings and teamwork.
3. Train ESS and school staff in understanding and supporting families during transition. Transition may be an emotional separation as well as a program separation for the family (and staff too!). The family may be sad about having to leave a program with which they are familiar.
4. Provide joint staff training. It is cost- and time-effective, ensures that staff get the same information, and provides a chance for relationship building among staff. Use strategies to help staff become familiar with other agency programs, including cross-program visitation and the use of written materials or videotapes.



Appendices

Choosing an Early Childhood Program for Your Child

A family can use the following questions to evaluate potential programs for their child.

- Do children appear happy and actively involved with materials and each other?
- Does the program match the way your child learns?
- How does the program help children learn and develop language and motor skills?
- How does the program handle discipline and behavioral issues?
- How does the program help children learn how to get along with others?
- Do adults seem to enjoy the children?
- Are there enough staff to work with the children and provide them with good supervision?
- Is the environment clean, safe and good for learning?
- How are meals and snacks handled?
- Do the program hours and calendar meet the needs of your child and family?
- Is transportation available or is travel time to the program reasonable?
- What would be a typical day for your child?
- Do staff seem knowledgeable about working with young children, including those with disabilities?
- Would staff be willing to work with teachers, therapists or other consultants to help them serve young children?
- What is the ratio of children with and without disabilities?

- Is the room arranged in a way that promotes learning and that would be a good setting for a child who needs special equipment or arrangements because of a disability?
- How does the program communicate with and involve families?
- Does the program complement your family's values and cultural traditions?
- Does the program seem open to family input?
- How are families involved in making decisions about their children or the overall program?
- Did the staff's responses to your visit and your questions make you feel that this program would value you and your child?

A good resource for families in selecting early childhood services is *How to Choose a Good Early Childhood Program*, by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1-800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org). This is a pamphlet of questions for parents to consider or ask in locating an early childhood program.



Recommended Readings That Support Children in Transition

Amigos en Escuela/Friends at School, by Rochelle Burnett

Available in English and Spanish, shows children of different abilities working and playing together at school.

Published by Star Bright Books; ISBN 1887734155

Let's Care about Sharing, by P.K. Halliman

Encourages children to share toys and feelings and to play with each other.

Published by Ideals Children's Books; ISBN 1571021051

My First Day at School, by P.K. Halliman

Traces the first day of school with pictures of a classroom that includes children with and without disabilities.

Published by Ideals Children's Books; ISBN: 0824985338

Nick Joins In, by Joe Lasker

More serious book for children ages 4–8 about some concerns children have when a child in a wheelchair joins their class.

Published by Albert Whitman & Co.; ISBN: 0807556122

A Rainbow of Friends, by P.K. Halliman

About acceptance of others.

Published by Ideals Children's Books; ISBN 08224986539

Starting School, by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

General picture book and story about the first four months of school, showing children doing some typical and some less typical school activities.

Published by Puffin; ISBN 0140508430

Timothy Goes to School, by Rosemary Wells

Learning about making friends at school, including a boy who is less accepting of others and how Timothy copes with this.

Published by E.P. Dutton; ISBN 0140547150

Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen

Traces the first day of school with pictures of a typical kindergarten that includes children with and without disabilities.

Published by Alladin Paperbooks; ISBN 0689713339

Resources

The following resources support families in the transition process. Given the scope and purpose of this guide, this listing is not intended to include all available resources or to be an endorsement of services listed. However, it identifies contact information for key places where families can get information about:

- Supports and services
- Child care and early education
- Child health
- Child development
- Parenting and family life

New Hampshire Helpline

1-800-852-3388 or 1-603-225-9000 (24 hours a day)

www.nhhelpline.org

The New Hampshire Helpline database contains over 6,000 resource entries allowing you to use keywords to search for information and resources available within the state, a particular county, or town. Search for 24-hour emergency health care, transportation, food, battered women's shelter, etc.

Family Resource Connection, New Hampshire State Library

1-800-298-4321 (in-state) and 1-603-271-7931 (out of state)

www.state.nh.us/nhsl/frc

This free statewide information and referral resource connects families with services, programs, and information to meet the needs of their children including Head Start and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The State Library also has a free lending library of books and videos on all aspects of raising, caring for, and educating children, particularly children with special needs. The website has a directory of children's services.

Transition Dictionary

Area Agency Non-profit agency designated by the Bureau of Developmental Services/Department of Health and Human Services to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities of all ages in a region.

Child with an Educational Disability Child age 3–21 with a disability who requires special education and related services.

Disposition of Referral When notified that a child may have an educational disability, the school, with the parents and other members of the IEP team, must meet within 15 days to decide what needs to happen next. This meeting is known as the “disposition of the referral meeting.”

Eligible Child Term used by Family-Centered Early Supports and Services for a child, birth through age 2 with a developmental delay, at risk for substantial developmental delay, or with an established condition with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

Eligibility Conditions and/or information that show that Family-Centered Early Supports and Services are needed for infants and toddlers or that special education and related services are needed for a child age 3–21.

ESS See Family-Centered Early Supports and Services.

ESY [Extended School Year] Services Special education and related services that are provided to a child age 3–21 with a disability when school is not typically in session, if determined by the IEP team to be needed.

Evaluation Procedures used by qualified personnel to determine a child’s initial and continuing service eligibility.

Family Parent(s), legal guardian(s), or surrogate parent with legal responsibility for making decisions about the care, education and treatment of a child with a disability.

Family-Centered Early Supports and Services [ESS] A wide range of supports, such as information, guidance, instruction, therapeutic interventions, and emotional support, provided under public supervision by qualified personnel to meet the developmental needs of a child, birth through age 2, with a disability and his/her family.

IEP Team Family members, administrative and instructional school personnel, and/or any other individuals chosen by the family or school.

IFSP Team Family members, ESS personnel representing different disciplines, representatives of other agencies providing supports to the eligible child and family, and/or any other individuals chosen by the family.

Individualized Education Program [IEP] Written plan for special education and related services to a child age 3–21 with a disability.

Individualized Family Support Plan [IFSP] Written plan for Family-Centered Early Supports and Services for a child, birth through age 2, with a disability and his/her family. The IFSP may be used for a child with an educational disability ages 3 through 5, if agreed to by the IEP team.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEA 2004] Federal law with requirements about Family-Centered Early Supports and Services for a child age birth through age 2 with a disability and his/her family (covered in Part C of IDEA) and for special education and related services provided through school districts for a child with a disability age 3 through 21 (covered in Part B of IDEA).

Informed Consent Acknowledgement by signature that the parent understands and gives permission for carrying out of the activity for which consent is sought.

LEA [Local Education Agency] Representative A required member of the IEP team, the LEA Representative must be qualified to provide or supervise preschool special education, be knowledgeable about the curriculum, and know about the resources of the district.

Least Restrictive Environment [LRE] Setting where a child with a disability is educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children without disabilities.

Local Education Agency [LEA] School district responsible for providing educational services to a child age 3 through 21. (*Note: The term LEA is not used in this guide. It is defined here because families may hear this term used by staff during the transition process.*)

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Evaluation and assessment of a child conducted by qualified professionals from two or more different disciplines, and which includes the family.

Natural Environments or Settings Places and situations where a child without a disability lives, plays, and grows.

Procedural Safeguards Defined procedures and processes under federal and state law that protect the rights of the family and eligible child or a child with an educational disability.

Related Services Support services that are determined at the IEP meeting to be needed by a child in order to benefit from special education. Examples include: assistive technology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, or special transportation.

SAU School Administrative Unit

Service Coordinator Individual who, together with a family, has responsibility for accessing, coordinating, and monitoring service delivery for a child birth through age 2 with a disability and his/her family; responsibilities include facilitating development of a transition plan to enable the family to access the area agency, community supports or preschool services when a child is no longer eligible for Family-Centered Early Supports and Services.

Special Education Specially designed instruction to meet the unique educational needs of a child with a disability, age 3 through 21.

Transition Conference Convened by the Transition Team to update the Transition Plan with the school district and other agencies, as appropriate, and to review program options from the child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year.

Transition Plan Component of the IFSP that addresses transition from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to the public school system, area agency services for a child 3 years of age or older, or other community services.

Transition Team Family members, Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) staff, school district personnel and, if appropriate, recreation programs, Partners in Health and community services staff who develop the Transition Plan.

Acknowledgements

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The following resources provided ideas that were incorporated into the guide:

Change Is in the Air: A Guide to Transition from Early Supports and Services to Preschool Special Education, by the Preschool Technical Assistance Network (PTAN) at Southeastern Regional Education Service Center (SERESC).

Promising Practices for Early Supports and Services for Parents Regarding Early Childhood Transition, by Leela Guild, Tina Macleod, Audrey Epstein, and Carolyn Stiles. From the 2002 New Hampshire Family Support Conference workshop, "Is There a Black Hole After Early Supports and Services . . . or Not!!!"

Know Your Rights! A Rights Handbook for Families with Children Receiving Family-Centered Early Support and Services in New Hampshire, by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2003.

NH Rules for Developmental Services, Section 510, by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities, by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Transition from Early Intervention: A Family Guide, by the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College, 2003.

Transition at Age 3: Steps for Success: Transition Guide for Oklahoma Children with Disabilities, the Families, SoonerStart Early Intervention Services, Schools, and Community Programs, by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2001.

Steps to Transition, by the Hawaii Interagency Transition Team, 2001.

How to Choose a Good Early Childhood Program, by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990.

Early Childhood Transition Components, by Peggy Hayden.

Special thanks to all families, Early Supports and Services providers, school personnel, early care and education partners, and others who worked throughout the process to provide information, insight, and assistance in the development of this guide.



Transition plan for _____ Date of birth _____

WHAT WILL WE DO?	WHO WILL DO THIS?	WHEN WILL WE DO THIS?*	DATE COMPLETED
Transition plan initiated at IFSP Meeting.			
Decision made regarding referral to special education.			
Written referral made to special education and/or other community service.			
Submit request to have AA eligibility determined.			
Transition Conference scheduled with family, ESS, school, others as appropriate.			
Information sent to school, other community services.			
Evaluation to determine eligibility for special education.			
Eligibility for AA services determined.			
IEP developed.			
IEP services implemented.			
Desired community services in place.			
Follow-up contact with family to assess outcome of transition.			

*Refer to transition timeline page 8 of 'A Guide for Families and Staff' when determining dates.

I participated in the development of this plan.

Parent approval

Date plan approved

Service coordinator



Transition Contact Information

Town _____ SAU# _____

ESS Service Coordinator

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

Preschool Contact

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

Special Education Director

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

District Preschool Program

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

Other Community Services

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

Other Community Services

Address _____
Phone/Email _____

Other Important Information

